

September 12, 2016

Senator Thad Cochran  
Chairman  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
S-128 Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

Congressman Harold Rogers  
Chairman  
House Appropriations Committee  
H-305 Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

Senator Barbara Mikulski  
Ranking Member  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
S-146A Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

Congresswoman Nita Lowey  
Ranking Member  
House Appropriations Committee  
1016 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Cochran and Rogers, and Ranking Members Mikulski and Lowey:

As Mayors of U.S. cities struggling to combat the national opioid abuse epidemic, we write to respectfully urge you to fully appropriate funding recently authorized under the *Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act* (114-198) in the anticipated FY 2017 Continuing Resolution.

Specifically, we urge you to provide \$103 million authorized for the implementation of the Department of Justice's Comprehensive Opioid Abuse Grant Program. The program will enhance first responders' ability to address local opioid abuse and will enable local agencies to: train employees in emergency overdose reversal drug administration; implement alternatives to incarceration programs; establish programs to catch individuals unlawfully distributing prescription opioids; and initiate prescription drug take-back programs to prevent addiction in our communities. These initiatives are especially needed to help address the exponentially-increasing addiction rates among women, veterans, and the elderly.

The nation continues to struggle with unprecedented rates of prescription overdose and addiction that have a profound impact on the public health and safety of this country. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) report that in 2014, nearly 2 million Americans abused or were dependent on prescription opioids and 28,647 Americans died from opioid related deaths, more than any other year on record. That equates to over 70 deaths per day, surpassing gunshot wounds and motor vehicle crashes as the most common injury-related cause of death in the United States, according to the Office of National Drug Control Policy. This trend shows no sign of slowdown or reversal; in fact, many of our cities have seen a significant increase in opioid overdoses in recent weeks. To illustrate: Boston has seen a 14 percent increase in narcotic-related illnesses and a 34.6 percent increase in Narcan administration in just one year; there were 173 overdose deaths in Massachusetts in June; and the City of Cincinnati recently experienced 174 heroin overdoses in just 6 days.

With over 1,000 individuals treated in emergency departments daily for misusing prescription opioids, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) estimates the economic impact of the opioid epidemic to be \$55 billion in health and social costs related to prescription opioid abuse

and \$20 billion in emergency and inpatient care services for opioid poisoning treatment each year. The CDC identifies West Virginia, New Mexico, New Hampshire, Kentucky and Ohio as States with the most rapidly increasing rates of death from opioid overdose.

While the opioid epidemic is national in scope, it is experienced most intimately at the local level, where law enforcement agencies and emergency medical services experience first-hand the devastating impact of opioid addiction on the communities they protect and serve. Rates of addiction and overdose from opioid abuse have rapidly outpaced local governments' ability to effectively respond to and manage the epidemic and are straining already-limited resources. For example, the City of Cincinnati budgeted \$100,000 for Narcan in its recently budget; only two months into its budget year, the City has spent \$125,000.

We are grateful for Congress' recognition and passage of a comprehensive federal response to the opioid epidemic, but without implementation funding, the law does little to address the ongoing – and worsening – crisis we are facing in our cities. Hence, as those serving on the front lines of this crisis, we urge you to fully fund the *Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act* (114-198) in the upcoming FY 2017 Continuing Resolution.

Sincerely,

Mayor John Cranley  
Cincinnati, Ohio

Mayor Hillary Schieve  
Reno, Nevada

Mayor Martin J. Walsh  
Boston, Massachusetts

Mayor Jonathan Rothschild  
Tucson, Arizona

Mayor John Giles  
Mesa, Arizona

Mayor Betsy Hodges  
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake  
Baltimore, Maryland

Mayor Francis Slay  
St. Louis, Missouri

Mayor Edward B. Murray  
Seattle, Washington

Mayor Eric Garcetti  
Los Angeles, California

Mayor Edwin Lee  
San Francisco, California

Mayor Bill de Blasio  
New York, New York

Mayor James Kenney  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania